

Highlights of Synod of Living Waters meeting, Jan. 30, 2017

By Transylvania Presbytery teaching elder commissioner Rev. Karen Hartsfield

Beautiful First Presbyterian Church in Franklin, TN was the site for your Synod's yearly meeting. I provide highlights below, but should you wish greater detail, please do not hesitate to contact me at khartsfield5877@yahoo.com.

- Ralph Young, a ruling elder from Western Kentucky Presbytery, is the new moderator. Leonard Jordan, a ruling elder from Middle Tennessee Presbytery, is the new vice moderator.
- Dates to note: the next meeting of the Synod will be Jan. 29, 2018, at the same location. Presbyterian Women's 2019 meeting will be June 11-15 in Mississippi.

Wording of the Permanent Administrative Commission's (PAC) standing rules was updated, and the motion was approved. PAC was granted approval to decide small matters via email. Any one PAC member may object, to move a matter from small to otherwise.

- Financial information: per capita from Presbyteries to the Synod will increase in 2018 from its current \$3.62 to \$3.98.

The proposed 2017 budget was approved, noting that a deficit (first in 13 years) due to decreased membership Synod-wide will be absorbed by reserve funds. (The greatest contributor to decreased membership in our Synod was the result of a few large churches withdrawing from the denomination.) An audit of 2015 by an outside firm was clean. 2016 is being audited now by an outside firm. A budget forecast for 2018 predicts an additional deficit, which will again be covered by reserve funds. To minimize audit expenses for 2018, CPA member-volunteers may be sought. Assets and liabilities are balanced.

A motion was approved for Living Waters for the World (LWW) to diversify its funding, i.e. to allow it to solicit funds from foundations, as well as from Presbyteries, churches and individual disciples. To accomplish this, LWW will have its own, separate 501(c)3 number. LWW already has its own, separate board with representation by Synod members. Synod's standing rules regarding LWW will not change. A separate audit will be performed by LWW henceforth, which will be reported to Synod. LWW provided 837 water systems worldwide in 2016, at a cost of \$1.18 million, which meant its budget reported a deficit for the first time. LWW has reserves to cover the deficit. (Personal note: my husband, Jim, and I served for years on medical/dental mission teams to Puentes de Cristo in Reynosa, Mexico, where LWW had installed a water system. Good work, LWW!)

A Synod-wide child and youth protection policy was adopted. When a synod event is held at a specific church, the policy of that church will apply.

The Synod holds covenant partnerships with two seminaries (Columbia, Louisville), a children's home (Buckhorn), an Appalachian ministry, and eight educational institutions (Belhaven, Centre, King, Maryville, Pikeville, Rhodes, Stillman, Tusculum). Corresponding members from Belhaven and Pikeville attended, provided written and oral reports and met with the Covenant Relations committee. The Synod approved a renewed covenant with Stillman College. Maryville presented a written report.